DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 372 034 SP 035 304

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TITLE Educating the Reflective Practitioner for Catholic Secondary Schools.
PUB DATE Jul 93
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Australian Teacher Education Association (Perth, Western Australia, Australia, July 11-14, 1993).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Catholic Schools; Church Related Colleges; Competency Based Teacher Education; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Partnerships in Education; Practicums; *Preservice Teacher Education; Program Evaluation; Program Implementation; Secondary Education; Self Concept; *Teacher Education Programs; *Teacher Effectiveness; *Teaching Models
IDENTIFIERS Australia; *Reflective Teaching; *University of Notre Dame (Australia)

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the conceptualization and first year of implementation of a model of preservice teacher education and training established at the University of Notre Dame Australia to meet the specific needs of the Catholic education system. In setting up an appropriate model, the notion of the graduate teacher as one who is critically self-aware and sensitive to students' needs within a faith community assumed central importance. The nature of the Catholic school is outlined, with its emphasis on a holistic approach to education and its view of school as community. An essential component of the Diploma in Education program is students' involvement in a regular, well-planned, professionally supervised experience in schools. A curriculum sequence based on developmental and sequential stages was designed to facilitate the development of competence in planning, implementing, and evaluating teaching-learning processes and contexts across different subject areas. Data analysis that used a modified version of the Developmental Research Sequence provided evidence that the first year of the course has helped neophyte teachers move towards an ideal of reflective practice through building self-efficacy. (Contains 16 references.) (JDD)

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ED 372 034

EDUCATING THE REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER FOR CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Australian Teacher Education Association, Perth, Western Australia, 11-14 July, 1993

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EDUCATING THE REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER FOR CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Introduction

The University of Notre Dame Australia formally commenced its operations with a foundation intake of students in the College of Education in January 1992. 30 neophyte teachers commenced the one year 'end on' Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) with a focus on Catholic education - of which 24 graduated at the end of the year.

This paper reports on the conceptualisation and first year of implementation of the model of pre-service teacher education and training established, among other things, to meet the specific needs of the Catholic education system. Data for formative use in revising the model and assessing its strengths and limitations are also provided through an analysis of students' end of course colloquium papers. In setting up an appropriate model the notion of the graduate teacher as one who is critically self-aware and sensitive to the needs of his or her students within a faith community assumed central importance in subsequent decision making.

To gain insight on a rationale for the preparation of teachers especially to meet the needs of Catholic secondary education, but also meeting the requirements of state schools and other independent schools, the nature of the Catholic school has first to be appreciated. A Catholic school is founded on the belief that Jesus is the source of all life and from this foundation the need is recognised to develop a holistic approach to education so that all may be enriched. Fundamental to this ideal is the view of school **as** community as distinct from school **and** community, and it is a recognition of the need to develop a community climate which gives the Catholic Church its mandate for participating in education at all levels. The Church gives a special significance to the mission of the school in the following terms:

> In virtue of its mission, then, the school must be concerned with constant and careful attention to cultivating in students the intellectual, creative, and aesthetic faculties of the human person; to develop in them the

> ability to make correct use of their judgement, will and affectivity; to promote in them a sense of values; to encourage just attitudes and prudent behaviour; to introduce them to the cultural patrimony handed down from previous generations; to prepare them for professional life, and to encourage the friendly interchange among students of diverse cultures and backgrounds that will lead to mutual understanding.
>
> (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1990; p. 16)

The foregoing emphasises the distinctive nature of Catholic schools insofar as they promote the "... all round development of their students: physical, intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic, vocational, moral and religious" (Flynn, 1985; p.331).

A number of Catholic educators have recently expressed their concern regarding the maintenance of the Catholic school identity. It has tended to lose some of its distinctiveness due, in part, to social and demographic changes and strong secular influences surrounding externally produced curricula, public examinations and changing balances in school populations. The latter is reflected in the relative influence of those seeking admittance to Catholic secondary schools without necessarily subscribing to their religious foundation and values. Also budgetary influences stemming from changes to funding arrangements. Notwithstanding these trends, a significant contributory factor to the diminution of the Catholic ethos in systemic schools over the last decade is believed to be the contemporary staffing arrangements of Catholic secondary schools. Due to the relative decline in numbers, and the consequent progressive retreat of the religious orders from teaching and into pastoral ministry across a range of institutions other than schools, replacement staff have necessarily been drawn from the pool of lay professionals (Table 1). The issues surrounding this phenomenon are detailed by Murphy (1993).

Part of the rationale for teacher education and training at Notre Dame, therefore, is to ensure that graduating teachers are professionally prepared to assume many of the roles and teaching duties previously performed by religious, including the teaching of Religious Education, not only as a curriculum subject but also in a form and manner which pervades the life of the school. It should be noted, however, that while the University is

evolving a distinctive identity, students from a range of religious beliefs and backgrounds are welcomed into the University community.

Year	Primary	Secondary	Religious	Lay	Total	
	1981	984.5	883.7	350.1	1,518.1	1,868.2
	1982	1,019.6	962.6	330.2	1,652.0	1,982.2
	1983	1,080.0	1,047.8	308.5	1,819.3	2,127.8
	1984	1,094.6	1,080.8	279.5	1,895.9	2,175.4
	1985	1,089.0	1,120.4	254.9	1,954.5	2,209.4
	1986	1,120.1	1,201.1	243.3	2,077.9	2,321.2
	1987*	1,164.0	1,286.0	230.0	2,220.0	2,450.0
	1988*	1,212.6	1,339.0	209.5	2,342.1	2,551.6
	1989*	1,251.0	1,404.8	211.5	2,445.0	2,655.8
	1900*	1,312.8	1,446.0	168.6	2,590.2	2,758.8
	1991*	1,387.1	1,458.3	150.8	2,694.6	2,845.4

Table 1: Staffing Trends 1981-1991. Full-time equivalent teachers
(Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia,1991;p 33)

Rarely is it possible to develop a professional curriculum from 'the ground up'. Most curriculum development, where it does occur, proceeds by a process of 'disjointed incrementalism' (McNeil, 1990; p.125) - a tinkering around at the edges rather than through any fundamental reconceptualisation of programmes. Foundation staff were presented with a situation requiring the application of curriculum development in a 'pure' sense to the endeavour of constructing a professional curriculum to meet the needs of beginning teachers. An important criterion was that graduating teachers would meet the specific needs of Catholic secondary schools as well as the professional requirements of employers in other systems including the public education sector.

The vision of the sort of teacher who would graduate from Notre Dame, and the infrastructure necessary to give it form and meaning, was developed in the first instance by the Course Coordinator using his experience and observation of student teachers over a protracted period as teacher supervisor and school principal. This was elaborated and supported by reference to a number of 'needs definers', including Senior Teachers and Principals in Catholic and secular secondary schools; members of the Executives of professional associations; colleagues in the Australian Catholic University, officials in the Western Australian Catholic Education Office and the central Ministry of Education and

by recourse to the relevant research literature. Here the seminal works of Shulman (1986) and Schon (1987) were contemplated in evolving a model of initial teacher preparation that would meet the criteria mentioned above.

Theoretical considerations

With respect to developing subject matter competence in student teachers, and in order to assist with the anticipated movement of their teaching frames away from the disciplines studied in their undergraduate degrees towards the acquisition of pedagogical subject matter knowledge, it became important to recruit Senior Teachers as 'insiders'. Those appointed to support the various Subject Methods components of the programme were either practitioners in schools or consultants in central offices who, in addition to being recognised as leaders in their subject areas, were characterised by their own subject matter competence and enlightened views of education. To this end, Hewson and Hewson (1989) note that the thoughts teachers have about subject content and about the students they are about to teach influences the way in which they will teach. This assertion converges with Shulman's view of teaching that 'emphasizes comprehension and reasoning, transformation and reflection' (p1.) and underpinned early thinking about course design (Carter, Carre and Bennett, 1993). With respect to design considerations similar reasoning was extended to the interactions we expected to occur between experienced and neophyte teachers.

Schon (1987) notes with respect to educating the 'reflexive practitioner' across a range of professions that, within academia, divisions between acquiring an appropriate theoretical focus and the development of professional skills and competencies have also surfaced. At source this appears to be derived from a crisis of confidence in professional knowledge itself, and in the curriculum offered by university based professional schools regarding choices between relevance and rigour. The issue is highlighted when he asserts "... if there is a crisis of confidence in the professions and their schools, it is rooted in the prevailing epistemology of practice" (Schon, 1987; p.12).

The advancement of high status knowledge upon which the modern research university is founded is also being called into question. A basic assumption hitherto has been that academic research yields useful professional knowledge, and, in the interplay between teaching and research, in which teaching is informed by research, professional knowledge taught in the faculties will in some way prepare neophytes for the real world of practice. This assumption is increasingly being called into question by educational policy makers and those in the field concerned with what the research has to say about improving education across a range of endeavour.

As alluded to above, the waters are indeed muddied around the links between practice and theory in many professional schools - not only in Departments of Education. Schon presents the dilemma as a tension between needing to master a body of rigourous knowledge derived from an objectivist epistemology and supported by a technical rationality on the one hand, and on the other the ability of practitioners to function in 'indeterminate zones of practice', described as follows:

> These indeterminate zones of practice - uncertainty, uniqueness, and value conflict escape the canons of technical rationality. When a problematic situation is uncertain, technical problem solving depends on the prior construction of a well formed problem - which is not itself a technical task. ... It is just these indeterminate zones of practice, however, that practitioners and critical observers of the professions have come to see with increasing clarity over the past two decades as central to professional practice.
>
> (Schon,1987; pp.6-7)

The former requires the prior construction of a well formulated problem which itself defies the canons of technical rationality, since by its nature a problem situation is invariably uncertain. The latter are characterised by uncertainty, uniqueness and values conflict. Schon states further, "It is just these indeterminate zones of practice, however, that practitioners and critical observers of the professions have come to see with increasing clarity over the past two decades as central to professional practice." (p.7.).

With considerations such as these in mind the school focused model for the initial preparation of teachers at Notre Dame was conceived. Central to its implementation was the development of a partnership between the schools and the University in which the former were to be brought close to the students in both a conceptual and a physical sense.

The Partnership Model of School Experience

An essential component of the Diploma in Education programme for the professional development of the students, referred to as Teacher Associates, is their involvement in a regular, well planned professional supervised experience in schools. Throughout the course, on-going 'School Experience' is the vehicle by which students develop a special relationship with their school. During the course of the year they are regarded as junior colleagues or Teacher Associates by school and University staff.

School experience, therefore, is central to the holistic programme of teacher education and training provided at the University. To realise this in practice, schools are invited to work in partnership with Notre Dame in order to provide learning opportunities and to facilitate the fully integrated personal and professional development of the Teacher Associates as secondary school teachers from their initial point of entry to the profession. School experience is designed in such a way as to allow for the integration of theory with practice. It is, however, more than an opportunity to rehearse and refine teaching skills - important as these are. Teacher Associates undertake directed observation in school and engage in the analysis of issues arising in lectures and classes at the University in the light of their school based experiences. They are also asked to participate in, and contribute to, the life of their partnership school beyond the formal curriculum in whatever way they can.

Structure of School Experience:

The school experience program is structured as follows:

1.0 Each Teacher Associate is assigned to one partnership school for the whole year of the course.

2.0 At their partnership school the Teacher Associates are assigned to three departments, Religious Education and two others according to their nominated specialist teaching areas.

3.0 Each Department is encouraged to adopt the Teacher Associates as junior members of the Department; to provide them with opportunities to teach a range of classes with different needs and abilities from Years 8 to 11, and to participate in other Departmental activities.

4.0 One member of each Department is asked to assume overall responsibility for coordinating the Teacher Associate's programme by arranging their classroom and teaching experiences. It is anticipated that a number of members within a Department will accept the Teacher Associates in their classrooms for teaching and/or observational experiences.

5.0 Individual teachers in whose classes the Associates assume a teaching role are asked to provide lesson critiques using the format developed and supplied by the University.

6.0 Throughout the year Associates are invited to participate in a range of co-curricula activities at their partnership school, both on and off campus, in order to broaden the base of their professional socialisation and to contribute to the life of the school.

School experience follows a curriculum sequence based on developmental and sequential stages. This has been designed in order to optimise the progressive professional development of the Teacher Associate's understanding of educative processes, and to facilitate the development of competence in planning, implementing and evaluating teaching-learning processes and contexts across different subject areas. This sequential

and developmental sequence is reflected in the specific outcomes determined for each stage; the increasing complexity of the requirements to be met at each stage, and a progressive increase in time for which the Teacher Associate is expected to teach and otherwise contribute to a particular class's programme.

Stages of School Experience:

School experience, therefore, progresses through four major stages, each of which is summarised below.

Stage One

1.0 Directed observation within a school for several days during the first two weeks of the school year. Following this experience, the Associates undertake four weeks of intensive preparation at the University, including the micro-teaching of classes comprised of Year Seven and Eight students. The latter is in order to develop elementary competence in the basic skills necessary for successful participation in subsequent classroom activities in concert with a class teacher as part of their graded entry to teaching.

Stage Two

On completion of their initial University-based preparation the Associates return to their partnership schools for two consecutive days each week - Monday and Tuesday - for 10 consecutive weeks, and during this stage the Teacher Associates complete the following tasks :-

2.1 **Observation**

Observation tasks set by the Associate's University lecturers ensure a close link between the theoretical content of coursework and their practice in schools.

2.2 **Teaching**

Working in partnership with their supervising teacher, the Associates gradually assume increased responsibility for a variety of tasks leading eventually to the

teaching of at least one full lesson in their major, or preferred, teaching area in each of their practicum days beginning in the third week of this stage. Whole class teaching commitments are increased gradually over the remaining weeks, so that in the ninth and tenth weeks the Associates are teaching at least three lessons each week - one from each of their subject areas.

2.3 **Non-teaching Participation**

As mentioned previously, Associates are encouraged to be involved in other school-based activities throughout the year. The extent to which this is feasible may vary from student to student depending on their study commitments, personal abilities and school context.

Stage Three

School experience for first semester concludes with a two-week full-time block practice. This occurs during the second term of the school year. During these two weeks the Associates increase their teaching load to a minimum of three lessons per day - one in each subject area.

On completion of the two week block practice, the Associates return to full-time attendance at the University in order to complete courses; sit for first semester examinations and commence preparation for their Assistant Teacher Programme (ATP).

Stage Four

During this stage Associates return to their partnership school to take part in an ATP for the whole of term three. In this phase they progress over the course of ten weeks to a more or less full teaching load in Religious Education and their two other nominated teaching areas.

Evaluation of the initial implementation of the model

At the conclusion of 1992, all members of the foundation class completed an evaluation instrument.. Respondents were asked to consider each Stage separately, and to rate their responses on a 5 point scale ranging from Not worthwhile (1) through Worthwhile(3) to Very Worthwhile (5) (Figure 1). Written free form responses were also elicited.

1 Not worthwhile	2	3 Worthwhile	4	5 Very Worthwhile

Figure 1: Scale for evaluation of School Experience

With the exception of Stage 2, the responses indicated an almost unanimous rating of 'Very worthwhile' for Stages 1,3 and 4. Representative comments were:

Stage 1: - " helped me settle into the school; to feel at home"; " not seen as a 'prac teacher'"; " an essential introduction to the year"; "invaluable"; " relevant to the classes later at NDA"

Stage 3: - "very important, excellent introduction to Stage 4"; opportunity for longer term continuous planning and teaching and relating to students"; "very helpful in understanding classroom management"; "the opportunity for continuity of teaching was a great opportunity"; " could make mistakes, get over them and then approach ATP better prepared"; " great idea that it was only two weeks - gave time to stop and reflect"

Stage 4: - "appreciated being left only own"; "don't change it"; "very valuable opportunity for continuity in preparation and teaching"

A particularly telling and recurring comment from the partnership schools' concurrent evaluation of the programme, which aligned with the perceptions of the Teacher Associates, was that the Associates came to be accepted as members of the permanent staff by teachers, administrators and students, rather than being regarded as temporary student or practice teachers.

Stage 2 proved to be the most demanding and difficult stage of the course, arising from the necessity to balance teaching commitments for two days per week in school with attendance at University based classes, and completing assignments arising therefrom during the other three days of the week. In 1993 the expectations set for both the theoretical and practical aspects of school experience and formal course work - were modified. Recent formative evaluations conducted this year indicate that a more manageable balance has been achieved as intended.

The only other area for course improvement suggested by the students related to the quality and frequency of supervision provided by school and University supervisors. As a consequence of this feedback, in 1993 the University (a) offered a course in supervisory techniques for teachers, (b) increased the frequency of visit by University supervisors to and average of one visit per fortnight and (c) rationalised the number and spacing of assignments and assessments set by the Special Methods tutors.

Reflective practice evaluation-research methodology

Comprehensive rationales regarding approaches to qualitative research and their justification are to be found in Erickson (1986), Tesch, (1990) and Peshkin (1993). It is beyond the scope of this paper to engage in the epistemological debate regarding the use of qualitative versus quantitative methods in social research, other than to record our personal view that much of it to date has been substantially unproductive in facilitating the generation of theory; providing for findings that are cumulative, and, especially in the case of education, guiding and informing educational improvement.

The purpose of this study was to establish the meanings constructed out of the reflective experiences of neophyte teachers as they underwent their early professional socialisation with an orientation to teaching in Catholic secondary schools. This was in order to make evaluative judgements about the extent to which the model for initial teacher preparation was effective in meeting its declared purposes, as evidenced by students'

reflections of their experiences upon completion of the course. As alluded to above, the principal data for informing evaluative judgements were obtained from documents prepared by the students as a basis for their participation in end of course colloquia around the themes of:

1. Personal Identity and Role of the Teacher as Educator in the Catholic tradition.
2. Teaching: An Interaction with Youth
3. Teaching in a Catholic Secondary School.

Colloquia represented one of the culminating activities required for completion of the course and took place in the last two weeks of the programme. While all 24 graduating Teacher Associates underwent this experience, 16 of them actually provided formal, documented reflections for analysis. These in turn were based on material accumulated by each of them throughout the year across a variety of contexts and settings both in schools and on campus. A range of activities designed to promote reflexivity across a developmental sequence of professional study and practice were also conducted throughout the course and integrated within the programme.

Supplementary data were obtained by recourse to students' reflective journals, lesson self - evaluations and school situational analyses. These were a source of anecdotal evidence used for formative evaluation of the course as implementation proceeded, as well as providing 'insider' perspectives on students' professional growth. The learning activities supported a model of graded entry to the profession and the development, practice and refinement of teaching skills allied with an emerging vision of 'self' as educator. The developmental and sequential stages of school experience have been delineated in an earlier section of this paper.

Students reported that, while they did not find the preparation for end of course colloquia to be an easy task, they felt that it was warranted and thoroughly worthwhile in helping them to reflect upon their cumulative experiences in a focused way. The former

also provided a mirror image of themselves as persons and practitioners capable of contributing to the life of a faith community in a Catholic secondary school. One student, for example, stated:

> These [papers *sic*] are the culmination of a year's study, and apart from complaints about this task I freely admit to the fact that it is really an essential part of your study. All the Dip.Ed. students who write these essays should get them bound and keep them on their desk. When they start to get complacent they should read them and reminisce on"those old NDA days of commitment, idealism and truth."

Developmental Research Sequence (DRS)

The data were subjected to analysis via a modified version of the Developmental Research Sequence advocated by Spradley (1980). The purpose of the DRS is to discover cultural patterns in order to ascertain how people construct meaning out of their experiences. Its application consists of proceeding with a sequence of tasks in order to discover cultural patterns i.e. an organisation of activities, artifacts and knowledge and the meanings attributed to them by individuals.

For the investigation reported here, the modified sequence adopted for structuring data consisted of content analysing each student's reflections across the three dimensions of self as teacher, interacting with youth and teaching in a Catholic school. This involved a preliminary search for categories that would capture cultural domains in the first instance. "A cultural domain is a category of meaning that includes other smaller categories (Spradley, 1980; p.88). In other words, cultural domains constitute categories of meaning summarised by a cover term, included terms and a semantic relationship between them such as "X is a form of Y", "X is a way to do Y", "X is a stage in Y", and so on (Figure 2). In every culture there is only a small number of these universal semantic relationships.

Included terms	Semantic relationship (X is a means to Y)	Cover term

Subject matter competence
Thorough preparation
Setting the environment
Stimulating thought
Promoting discussion *are means to* **Effective teaching**
Being respected
Having self-confidence
Varying methods
Facilitating learning

Figure 2: An example of a cultural domain

The cultural domains derived from semantic analysis were then formed into taxonomies of meaning in order to discover cultural themes. To some extent the three overarching themes were already pre-figured (Eisner, 1990; p. 115) in order to guide and focus the synthesis of student reflexive experiences. Notwithstanding, a number of sub-themes emerged from the analysis of colloquium papers and these are discussed in the following section.

Analysis and Discussion

Space does not permit the detailed presentation of a large volume of qualitative data, even where it has been ordered and reduced to a number of domains which have been incorporated into taxonomies. Some selectivity in the presentation of data has been necessary, and selections for this paper have been based on the frequency and extent to which certain elements have been recurrent and/or exemplify certain forms of reflective practice.

Preliminary content analysis revealed several domains including 'attribution' (X is an attribute of Y), 'inclusion','rationale','location-for-action', 'function','sequence' and 'means-end'. The largest of these, indicated by the number of included terms within each domain, were 'inclusion', 'means-end' and 'attribution'. With respect to inclusion, the domain was largely circumscribed by notions of teaching, teaching as a career and vocation and the teachers role(s) and student concerns allied to the learning process. Pastoral Care also figured prominently and this domain is summarised in Figure 3.

Included terms	Semantic Relationship (X is included in Y)	Cover term
Group structure Close relationships Supportive environment Family contact Counselling Student access to welfare services Catholic community membership Opportunities for personal,academic, social and spiritual growth.	*are included in*	Pastoral care

Figure 3: Student perceptions of the Pastoral Care domain

The need to develop a closer relationship between teachers and students is nowadays well recognised, but it has long been a feature of Catholic education. One Teacher Associate summarised the nature and meaning of Pastoral Care for her in the following manner:

> ... the Catholic school system extends the notion of the Pastoral Care system even further, saying that pastoral care is the concern the school has that each individual belong to that community, and have the fullest possibility for personal, academic, social and spiritual growth ... it is suggested that pastoral care in Catholic schools is not simply a relationship between students and teachers but between all members of a school community... . To me, this suggests that Pastoral Care is just as relevant to teachers as it is for students, especially since teachers can really only minister at their best level to students when their own Pastoral Care needs are being met.

Student reflections indicated that this aspect of a Catholic school was a primary distinguishing feature in the inclusive manner in which it was interpreted and mediated to the school community. Further, it had an important role in the translation of the subject of Religious Education from being a curriculum subject to something that permeated the life of the community.

While several commented on the fact that this did seem to occur in their partnership school, it did not always work out in practice - as another student notes:

> From my own experience ... it seems that staff and students are constantly at logger heads over the place and value of Religious Education in school, and while parents endorse faith education on paper, there often seems little evidence of Religious Education backup coming from the home.

Close inspection of the means-ends domains emphasised emulating Jesus as teacher; promoting learning; developing 'the whole person' in faith and knowledge and engaging in positive interactions with students through informal activities in which avoiding 'authoritarianism' featured widely.

The semantic relationship 'attribution' served to focus attention on the desirable traits of 'the Catholic teacher' and Teacher Associates' personal reflections on their strengths and weaknesses. Also the attributes of the Catholic school. The major cultural domains unearthed through content analysis were all subjected to Taxonomic Analysis (Spradley, 1980; p.116). An exemplar derived from an analysis of domains circumscribing Teacher Associates' self-perceived strengths and areas for improvement is presented as Figure 4. Some of the concerns, such as lack of self-confidence and classroom management are well known to teacher educators and school supervisors and evoke little surprise. Concerns about adjusting the work level to student needs does suggest a level of sophistication in pedagogy requiring the ability to 'read' the needs of the class and individuals within it - even if responding effectively is regarded as problematic.

A. SATISFACTIONS IN:

1. Subject matter strength.

2. Providing clarity:
   - (a) *in explaining.*
   - (b) *delivery of material.*
   - (c) *diagnosing difficulties:*
     - (i) *remediating.*

3. Providing variety in teaching programmes.

4. Balancing familiarity with social distance.

5. Personal qualities:
   - (a) *energy,*
   - (b) *enthusiasm,*
   - (c) *ideals.*

B. CONCERNS WITH:

1. Inexperience.

2. Lack of self-confidence:
   - (a) *subject matter deficiencies.*

3. Desire to be liked by students.

4. Adjusting work level to student needs.

5. Poor classroom management.

6. Communication breakdown:
   - (a) *lack of understanding of others' views.*
   - (b) *insincerities:*
     - (i) *defensive distortions.*
     - (ii) *false fronts.*
     - iii) *lies.*
   - (c) *exaggerations.*

Figure 4: Taxonomy of Teacher Associates self-perceived strengths and limitations.

Relationships between classroom management, the desire to be liked and communication breakdown are not as 'clean' in practice as suggested in the Taxonomy (Figure 4). This is captured to some extent by another reflection.

> My other biggest weakness is in a quite natural desire to be liked. I have outlined the importance of this in being a successful teacher, but one must be careful not to be tempted to lower one's standards. It is a

> difficult line to walk between discipline and love, perhaps it's cruel to be kind, or is it better to be the iron fist in the velvet glove. I think the answer is fairness, being constant in my interaction and consistently abiding by set rules that the students are aware of.

Realistic self-awareness was reflected in the balance, for most Teacher Associates, between strengths and weaknesses and avenues for future professional growth. Enlarged frames for critical awareness are suggested in the recognition of personal strengths such as clarity, which is an underlying dimension of teaching, linking many of its diverse aspects; variety in programme offerings, implicit in which is the notion of student learning style; balancing familiarity with social distance, evoking images of a certain type of classroom climate, and depth in subject matter knowledge. When perceptions such as these are integrated with realistic interpretations of personal qualities, and reconciled with an appreciation of one's inexperience and areas where more attention is required, claims can be sustained for the effectiveness of the course at least in the area of moving students towards reflective practice. This observation if it is to be confirmed, however, requires further monitoring of the professional socialisation of neophyte teachers longitudinally across the pre-service year with follow up into the early years of teaching.

Themes connect different sub-systems of a culture and in so doing serve as a general semantic relationship among domains. One way to discover themes is to look for relationships among domains and this was the approach adopted at a superordinate level in analysing the data.

Apart from the pre-figured overarching themes of 'self as teacher', 'interaction with youth' and 'the Catholic secondary school' which provided the foci for the colloquia and were accepted in the analysis as 'givens', a number of sub-themes emerged. The model of teaching presented by Jesus was recurrent in the data. The essence of this is captured by one of the Teacher Associates as follows:

> Jesus was a born teacher. He was not perfect; he lost his temper; he made mistakes, but he succeeded because he taught from the heart ... I would give anything to teach as Christ did and continues to do in hearts

> and minds. I like to think that by feeling this way and following Jesus' example I can in a small way continue on his mission.

Another theme that emerged was 'teaching with authority', which in turn was composed of a number of elements comprising subject matter competence, good classroom management, being approachable and ready to listen. A related and distinctive sub-theme, given the religious foundations of the schools in which practice took place and the ethos of the course, was 'teaching as ministry and vocation'.

Under the rubric of interacting with youth perceived to be undergoing a period of turmoil in the search for identity, the theme of 'constancy and consistency' emerged. This theme, however, could also be subsumed under 'developing the whole person'. Further sub-themes were embodied under 'developing informal relationships via extra -curricular activities', and 'building community with Pastoral Care'. The latter served to integrate the nature of the Catholic secondary school with the theme of 'interacting with youth' in an internally consistent manner.

Colton and Sparks-Langer (1993; p.50) identify four attributes of reflective decision makers labelled as efficacy, flexibility, social responsibility and consciousness. Efficacy refers to the teachers belief that they can have an impact on children and schools; flexibility is necessary for responsive teaching; social responsibility requires, among other things, caring participation in the school and local community, and consciousness refers to the awareness of one's own thinking and decision making.

Within the limitations of this study we now have evidence to support claims that the first year of the course has made some inroads into helping neophyte teachers move towards an ideal of reflective practice through building self-efficacy. Figure 3 summarises evidence of a caring and nurturing role undertaken by the Associates, and Figure 4 suggests they have acquired a realistic critical self-awareness across the sample studied.. From an evaluation perspective, further modifications to the programme have become apparent in the light of student feedback and multi-site observations by University staff and

partnership school supervisors. Changes are required in an environment which itself is changing as the University, and with it the College of Education, continues to grow. These are addressed in the final section of this paper.

Limitations of the study

The single source of data based on the self-perceptions of Associate Teachers as these apply to events, times and places, even when supplemented with a large amount of accumulated anecdotal evidence, requires that interpretation is both circumspect and tentative. Longitudinal monitoring of reflective practice in action would provide added depth to the study and its findings.

The reflective nature of the data, overall, is not directly affected by these considerations, but they do become problematic at the level of public versus private theories, and in separating out personal insights born out of reflective experience from those which have been 'received' from course notes and readings at the micro level. It is reasonable to expect that these will (and should) converge at some point

With respect to this point, Griffiths and Tann note :

> ... the divide between theory and practice, is, in effect, a divide between personal and public theories. ... personal theories are sometimes known as 'theory-in-action' (Schon) or as 'metaphors'... . Underlying each of these explanatory frameworks is the common argument that any intelligent action ... is an instance of a number of judgements about values, aims, commitments, as well as about the nature of knowledge, and how to understand what is going on in a particular situation... . The practice of any teacher is the result of some theory or other, whether acknowledged or not.
>
> (1992;p.76)

Public theories are embedded in the technical language and the rhetoric of academia, whereas practical theories are encapsulated in 'plain language' including the languages of 'common sense and metaphor'. Colton and Sparks-Langer (1993) also note, "The precision of language required to clarify one's own thinking - or that of others - clearly promotes deeper reflection and awareness of meaning" (p.50).

Thus when allied to a single data source, in which the analysis requires some arbitrary separation of public from private theories for the purpose of categorisation, the resultant taxonomies based on the synthesis of cultural domains should be interpreted with more overlap and dynamic interaction than is evident from a preliminary visual inspection of these data. With the convergence of public and private theories, if this assumption is accepted, the problem of boundaries should not be overstated for purposes of interpretation.

It should be borne in mind that the main purpose of the study was for course evaluation requiring, *inter alia*, an investigative component surrounding student growth as a reflective practitioner. This was an important consideration in initial course design and a major focus for implementation. Within the limitations referred to above, there is evidence to show that the course has been instrumental in moving the foundation intake of Teacher Associates towards this ideal, and it now requires a follow up into the first year of teaching in order to confirm this assessment. This is currently being undertaken by staff at the University.

For the Future

In 1994 the intake of students will be enlarged to fifty Teacher Associates and a primary teacher education programme will also commence. This will necessarily place strains on access to Catholic schools and the partnership model which has been central to the success of the programme to date. The limits of the model regarding infrastructural support for teacher education as a multi-site activity have yet to be tested. It appears likely that as numbers continue to grow the model will have to be adapted to take account of practical realities between what is desirable and what is feasible.

It is also intended to adopt a more ecumenical approach in responding to the needs of employers in other religious based schools and systems, as well as continuing to meet the employment criteria for graduates in the state sector. This has implications for the

enlargement of the partnership model to include a much wider range of schools than hitherto, and of adjusting University based courses in both their substantive nature and process elements. For example, 'Ministry of Teaching in a Catholic school' is likely to be reorientated and its nature reflected in the new title of 'Churches in Education', and Teaching Methods for Religious Education could be conducted in parallel courses on a sessional basis in order to accommodate the needs of students from other Christian traditions.

Further restructuring of Stage 2 of the model may be needed in order to spread the workload required of Teacher Associates in first semester, in spite of the longer academic year students experience at Notre Dame when compared with universities elsewhere.

Nevertheless the use of colloquia as a feature of the course will be retained in the light of staff/student feedback. This is because of the focus they provide for reflective practice and their promotion of an emergent critical self-awareness regarding self-as-person and teacher; self-study of their interaction with youth and a deep understanding of the nature of their partnership school which can only be ascertained by an immersion in it over the cycle of the school year. It is this last facet of the course, which runs counter to those programmes requiring a number of spaced block teaching practices of relatively short duration undertaken in different schools, which we believe has contributed significantly to its success from a teacher education point of view.

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